

# Strengthen the Home-School Collaboration for Student Achievement

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## Abstract

Home-school collaboration is important process in enhancing student's achievement. The purpose of this article is to present roles of keys participants in the home-school collaboration. The key participants are administrator, teacher, and parent. The significant roles of the key participants are creator and supporter of the home-school collaboration. They are to create positive environment both at home and school, to create two-way communication, and to create time and activities for them to work together. Simultaneously, all participants will also have to support in the learning, the feedback process, and the resources. To enhance the success of home-school collaboration, commitment, trust and teamwork are recommended. Home-school collaboration is a long-term process, thus, the commitment of all participants is to render their full support to increase students' achievement. Developing trust through working relationship by understanding and respecting each other enhances teamwork. Throughout the progress of teamwork, everyone supports each other and work harmoniously to reach the ultimate goal, which is student's achievement.

**Keywords:** Home-School; collaboration; student achievement; commitment; trust; teamwork



## Introduction

The learning of the child since birth started from home and that learning continues on with a formal education. Though the child moves on from informal education at home to formal education at school, education is not restricted to the location. Hence, the significant connection of home and school will have to be endured and sustained.

Holmes and Wynne (1991) stated that one thing that makes school so different from other organizations is the complexity of interrelationships among administrator, teacher, parent, and pupil. Boss and Krauss (2007) also pointed out that parents are encouraged to be involved in students' education. In unison, other researches also provide educators and parents with a substantial body of evidences that parent involvement and engagement is associated with children's academic performance and social competence (Henderson, 1978).

Therefore, it is imperative to study the significance of home-school collaboration, the roles of school administrator, teacher and parent as they work together to enhance the achievement of students.

### Part 1: The significance of home-school collaboration

Grothaus (2010) stated that involvement of parents and teachers, in striving together, provoke children in discovering and accepting their potential as a powerful being. The study of Christenson and Reschly (2009) concluded in their study that the collaboration of home and school result in more students participation in their academic activities and a better achievement in their attitudes toward learning and testing. Along with a progress in the attitude, the behavior, attendance, homework

completion, and test score are improved. Teachers experience greater job satisfaction and better relationship with students, administrators, and parents. Parents report that opportunities to enhance positive learning and self-efficacy are important. They experience a more positive outcome toward learning and a better communication with their children (Christenson & Reschly, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Paula and William (2013) indicated that developing excellent home, school and community is an ongoing process that takes time and effort. Consequently, school administrators, teachers should create opportunities in working together with parents, a culture of collaboration for students' improvement, and a focus on results.

Thus, Home-school collaboration significantly impact the achievement of the students by increasing the engagement of students, parents, and teachers in supporting and creating a positive environment for the children toward improving their academic potential and social skills. The attitude of students toward learning, behavior, attendance and homework completion are correspondingly improved. The collaboration decreases isolation of teacher and parent; increase commitment to achieve common goal and share responsibility toward the students' education. Hence, collaborative work of school and home has been found enriching through the working process and the commitment of parents, students, and school administrator.

### Part 2 Key participants and their roles in the home-school collaboration

In the home-school collaboration, administrators, teachers and parents are key participants

that play important roles in supporting students' achievement. Each participant plays different roles but as a joint effort to increase the potential of students both academically and socially.

## 2.1 Administrators' role

The task of collaboration requires an individual who possesses the qualities necessary to lead all the participants including the parents, teachers and the students in the home-school collaboration toward the desired goal of promoting students' achievement (Sepanlou, 2008).

In many schools, administrators are the in top level of management, they play the role of supervisor and facilitator. Administrators support and supervise the operation of the school and the implementation of the plan; they are key persons in developing policy and making decision, facilitating the development of the goals and managing the whole plan appropriately. Administrators encourage the engagement of all the participants in the home-school collaboration to work together in supporting the achievement of the students. The roles of administrator to be discussed in this collaborative process are the creator and supporter in the following areas:

### 1. To Create:

#### a. Positive Environment.

A positive school environment values families' contributions, emphasizes partnerships and ensures the safety space for positive interaction with educators (NASP, 2012). Positive environment for learning includes fostering an open discussion between home and school, listening to teachers and parents' opinions, providing opportunities for parents to have part in this collaboration for their

children' education, and engaging them in decision making.

#### b. Positive communication.

Communication barriers can deplete team energy and isolate individuals, additionally, poor communication among team members leads to the failure of the whole plan. Administrator is able to create atmosphere of positive communication through having open dialogue, listening respectfully, asking, clarifying questions and expressing their own views clearly. These opportunities are used to promote positive communication among participants in the home-school collaboration (Roberts and Pruitt, 2009).

#### c. Positive relationship.

A positive relationship between home and school must be created to sustain a long-term success of home-school collaboration. Positive relationship can begin with inviting parents to be volunteers and join school activities. Students are motivated to learn when they see parents involve in school activities and help in classroom (Dorfman & Fisher, 2002). When parents are welcomed by the school, and work positively with the team, they will feel comfortable with each other consequently their working relationship become constructive.

### 2. To Support: Administrator is to support and sustain the implementation of the collaboration of home and school by:

#### a. Support the parents' involvement in sharing vision, decision-making, planning and assessment.

A shared vision should be well set and interpreted to all participants in order to create professional home-school collaboration. It also requires an ongoing plan that can guide the collaboration efforts. Therefore, administrators



should engage teachers and parents in making plan, and determining the best practices of collaboration work for improving students' achievement. Distribute leadership to teachers who play the key roles in the collaboration, provide them with authorities and flexibilities in making decision, ensure that parents are also welcomed in the decision making process with administrators and teachers. Simultaneously, a continuous assessment also needed to sustain effective home-school collaboration. School administrators involve both teachers and parents in the assessment process to evaluate the collaboration plan, implementation, and the short-term and long-term achievement.

b. Support with resources.

The home-school collaboration requires the allocation of adequate resources to assist families and educators in fulfilling their partnership roles (NASP, 2012). School arranges the time for the appointment of teachers and parents and provides opportunities for them to meet and discuss the problems of students. Besides, the collaboration also needs financial support. Other resources include training courses for both teachers and parents; develop a family support room for teacher-parents and parents-parents communication; encourage teachers to collaborate with parents in students' education by setting up an incentive system (Smith and Piele, 2006).

c. Support the promotion of shared responsibilities.

Home-school collaboration results in a shared responsibility among parents and educators for educational outcomes (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999; Christenson, 1995). Every participant play their respective roles in helping students, all of them engage in joint efforts to increase mutual respect,

understanding and flexibility among home and school towards student achievement. Through this sharing process, parents, teachers, and administrator will join forces in respect and collaborative manner to address problems and develop plan for students (NASP, 2012).

## 2.2 Teachers' role

Teachers are the linkage of administrators and parents, and parents and students as well. Thus, with administrators as a team, they are to work together with parents and support them in assisting students' learning. Their roles are to create and support in the following areas:

### 1. To create:

a. Create positive learning environment.

Environment impacts students' abilities to learn. Thus it is important that teacher create positive learning environment to enrich student's learning by creating the warm and welcoming atmosphere within the school for both students and parents. Allow students to share their accomplishments with parents and welcome parents to be part of the learning of students by creating time to discuss goals and expectations for student's performance (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). Recognize the opinions of parents and support them in nurturing their children. Students do better when they realize that teacher and parents are team.

b. Create decision-making process that involves parents.

In the home-school collaboration, teacher and parents work as a team to address mutual concerns of students, forming committees to support student academic achievement, creating time to

discuss goals and expectations for student performance (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). Teachers can involve parents in decision-makings by creating collaborative activities, changing items on report cards and grading systems, and suggesting promotion requirements. Recommended steps for the inclusion of parents in decision-making are: 1. including parents in school meeting; 2. gathering information about students' education and behavior from parents; 3. sharing ideas with parents and listen to parents as well; 4. giving advice and take part in decision making while working together to support students' achievements.

c. Create volunteer program.

Creating a volunteer program in classroom allow parents to be involved with students and school. Parents are equipped with skills, talents, to support the program. (Virginia Department of Education, 2002), Involving them as a volunteer will allow them to use their capabilities to help students in the classroom. In order to achieve the goals of the program, parents should be invited to classroom, providing opportunities for them to help students with academic tasks including reading, participate in classroom activities, observe students learning. Time spent in the school and classroom can help parents gain a better understanding of the teacher's role as well as education system (Michigan Department of Education, 2011).

d. Create education time for parents to understand students and school.

Parents with lower education hold the opinion that they don't know the school educational system and curriculum, they might believe that they have little or nothing to contribute to their child's education (Michigan Department of Education, 2011). Therefore, school should provide

opportunities for parents to learn about school policy, student learning, and the positive way to collaborate with school and teachers for supporting student learning. Parents are encouraged to visit classroom, observe students learning, and interact with teachers to learn about student learning. They are also welcomed to attend discussion and forums, so that they have adequate information about school, policy and procedure. Parents may be assisted, supported and educated by school with parental skills to help in students in learning.

e. Create Positive two-way communication process.

Positive two-way communication is a powerful tool for teachers and parents to exchange information that enable them to assist students' learning. However, researchers insisted that communication between school and parents is a potential feedback process rather than a simple exchange of information (Katyal and Evers, 2014). Effective home-school collaboration stimulates parental empowerment through positive meaningful two-way communication between home and school based on mutual respect and trust. The better understanding between school, teachers and parents, the more collaboration and support they can experience.

## 2. To Support:

a. Parents' opportunity to collaborate.

There are a number of practical barriers that teachers face when involve parents in their children's learning and engage them in the communicational process with school educators. The limited time is the main barrier that reported by teachers, they are busy with daily teaching tasks, and have less time to communicate with parents.



Therefore, teachers and administrators need to seek out the effective ways to arrange time and provide opportunities for teachers and parents to communicate and discuss about students' learning and performances.

b. Support parents with feedback about student's learning and performance.

Parents are empowered to ask questions, provide feedback, and seek support from educators; equally, teachers also have responsibilities to support parents in helping students by sharing students learning feedback, performance, attendance and all the development of students that will impact student's achievement. Teacher can organize a conference with parents where student will present their scorecard; their interests, their learning strengths and weaknesses, homework completion and classroom performance.

c. Parents in Co-teaching with teacher.

Teachers are encouraged to involve parents in the co-teaching practices to support their children (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). Parents assist in co-teaching, and support the extra-curricular activities. Teachers and parents work together to set academic goals for students. The teacher may offer the parents a range of ways to participate in these educational goals, such as understand school curriculum and home reading activities (Michigan Department of Education, 2011).

### 2.3 Parents' role

Goldenberg (2004) claimed that parents play an important role in the children's education, they ensure the completion of homework; attend the parent-teacher conferences and school-based parents meeting. Family involvement is linked to student achievement at all grade levels, the more

involvement of parents and families, and the better student performance (Roberts and Pruitt, 2009).

As a result, the roles of parents in increasing student academic's achievement are to create and support in the following areas:

#### 1. To Create:

a. A positive learning environment at home.

There is no denying that a well home learning environment has a positive effect on students' achievement (Mary, 2001). Parents should set a time for learning, provide a comfortable and quiet place to work, provide spiritual, academic, and emotional support, allow opportunity to discuss the learning progress and barriers, the importance of effort and model of problem-solving behavior (NASP, 2012).

b. A teamwork with students.

Parent-student teamwork provides opportunities for them to discuss the learning progress and barriers, emphasize the importance of effort and model problem-solving behaviors (NASP, 2012) Thus, good teamwork create positive learning environment at home.

c. A Time to support teachers in classroom teaching.

Parents and teachers can work together in the classroom to develop opportunities for parents to participate meaningfully in students learning. The involvement of parents includes assisting in teaching, supporting the slower students, reading for students, and helping students with their assignments. Parents support teachers in classroom teaching decrease the working isolation of the teacher and boost the parent-teacher collaboration.

#### 2. To Support:

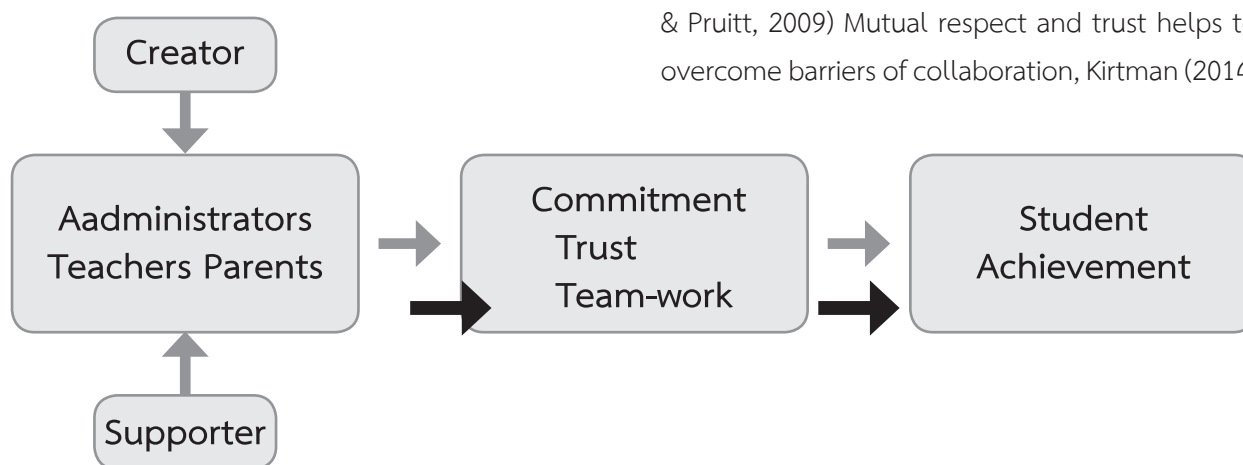
a. Students in the assignments and homework

Many researchers mentioned that helping with students' homework is an indispensable activity in home education (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). Parents can support students to do homework by creating a quiet place for them to work, having all the needed materials for the work, helping with homework, reading to their children, talking to each teacher about the homework, asking for extra help from teachers if students have trouble with homework (Michigan Department of Education, 2011).

b. Support school's activities as volunteer.

Parents can be part of the following school activities: review report cards, support participating in education in school building, volunteer in the classroom, attend the parent-teacher conferences and school-based parent meeting. In this way, more opportunities are provided for communication with school educators about students' education, share information, ideas and decision making for students' development. Parents involve in various school activities as volunteers help to reinforce the positive home-school collaboration.

### Part 3 Components to enhance successful home-school collaboration



This study discusses components that enhance home-school collaboration through the CTT model. Administrators, teachers and parents play the roles of creators and supporters in enhancing students learning through building commitment, trust and teamwork.

a. Commitment: All party is committed to assist the child to develop their fullest potential both academically and socially.

Participants should recognize commitment and accountability as effective element in the process of home-school collaboration (Holmes & Wynne, 1991). Home-school collaboration requires the commitment from all participants to assist students to develop to their fullest potential both academically and socially. Participants in the home-school collaboration must agree on and adhere to a working plan to guide their efforts.

b. Trust: Parents, school, and teachers work together with the trust that all party is doing the best for students.

The development of trusting relationships is very essential element in creating and sustaining family connections with the school (Michigan Department of Education, 2011). Trust is an vital factor in building the high-quality relationships needed to foster collaboration in school (Roberts & Pruitt, 2009) Mutual respect and trust helps to overcome barriers of collaboration, Kirtman (2014)





stated that building trust and relationships that can withstand critical feedback takes time, all the participants must constantly work on this open and honest behavior and maintain effective and clear communication (Roberts and Pruitt, 2009).

c. Team-work: In order for the goals to be accomplished, every parties are needed to accomplish their roles and responsibilities together are one.

Effective teamwork guides the development of home-school collaboration that fit the needs of every party, and provides an ongoing mechanism to address home-school concerns about students' performance (Virginia Department of Education, 2002). Administrator should encourage teachers to expend their abilities in involving and working with parents, support them with resources and materials needed. Teachers and parents keep communication with each other positive, ongoing and active, be enthusiastic in sharing responsibilities in order to make the teamwork more effective.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The joint work among school administrators, teachers and parents will undoubtedly contribute to student achievements. Everyone plays the role of creators and supporters to increase the potentials of the students. All participants take part in creating and supporting positive environment of learning, communicating, and sharing of responsibilities both at home and school. Commitment, trusts, and teamwork are key components in enhancing successful home-school collaboration.

Home-school collaboration is an ongoing process, thus participants in the home-school collaboration must be committed to render their full support to increase students' achievement.

Administrators are committed to create and support positive environment to improve two-way communication and an involvement of home and school. Teachers and parents are committed to work as team in providing feedback, dialog, and supporting various school activities. Deviant beliefs must be adjusted, removed or limited to the continuous improvement of cooperation. As a result, the home-school collaboration supported by administrators, teachers and parents will be improved.

The development of the trusting relationships between school educators and parents increases positive connection between administrators, teachers, and parents. To develop the trusting relationship, more opportunities should be provided so that administrators, teachers and parents will be able to work with each other. Through the working process, they will learn to understand and respect each other's perspective. Since students' achievement is the ultimate goal for everyone, then trust that all participants will do the best for students.

People that work as a team recognize that they are working toward the same goal. Thus, in order to be successful, everyone is team member. People in the team listen to each other, support one another and move together toward the same direction. Thus, administrator, teacher, and parents will continue to communicate effectively, share responsibilities, and support each other in what every way they can to reach the goal, which is student's achievement.

Hence, to expand home-collaboration, a team of administrator, teachers, and parents be faithful with their roles and put into practice the concept of home-school collaboration by starting with the commitment, trust, and team work.



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